GOD THROUGH NATURE

PURNENDU NARAYAN SINHA

GOD THROUGH NATURE

BY

PURNENDU NARAYAN SINHA

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

ADYAR MADRAS INDIA

1923

ERRATA

Page 9, line 10, *previous* should be precious.

Page 19, last para. should read :

Dr. Besant's address on Philosophy at the inauguration of the Brahmavidya Ashrama. (*The Theosophist, April, 1923.*)

"But you must dig deep down into yourself to find the God within you, and listen to His voice, which is your voice."—*At the Feet of the Master.*

Page 35, line 2, Govindā should be Govinda.

PART I

One of the ways of looking at God has been to look at Him and realise Him in Nature and through Nature. But the difficulty of man has been at all times to reconcile himself to and harmonise himself with Nature. The conflict has always been between his own nature and the Nature of God as manifested in the Universe. Yet the seed of Divine Nature is in every individual nature.

The nature of man in the limited sphere of his life is his own outlook on life, and the thoughts, desires and actions responding to the same. The Nature of God, what ought to be understood by the word Nature, in any particular world, is what God has willed for the good of that world ; what He has planned in order to carry out that will, and the way in which His Nature carries out that Plan, in every detail of evolution of both form and life, in that particular world. The Plan of God relates to the Universe as a whole but, with the limitations of the worlds we live in, we can only catch a glimpse of the same from a study of that part of the Plan which works out in any particular world.

The conflict is between man's own nature, which is a part of God's nature and which is in the making of God's nature, and God's nature which is all Beauty, all Harmony and all Love.

Yet man naturally runs after beauty, harmony and love and catches a glimpse thereof in his own nature and in the Nature around him. In the conflict with Nature man suffers but learns, and he goes onwards with increased knowledge and greater determination to a larger and larger assimilation of Divine Nature. It is not by neglecting the limited gifts of the individual nature, but by making a proper use of them, that the faculties which bring men in close touch with divine Nature grow.

In his own nature, man has the sexual instinct which he has inherited from the vegetable and the animal kingdoms of life. He had the fullest liberty with that instinct in those kingdoms of life. Nature carries that instinct forward into the human kingdom, to serve the Plan which works through her. But in man the instinct develops into love, the very essence of which is sacrifice. The instinct draws the husband, the wife and the child together to draw out and develop the Divine Nature of Unity based upon Love and Sacrifice.

The God in man is always there—as the Divine Nature behind him—urging man forward to collective unity based on love and sacrifice. Yet his individual nature may be a drag on the man in his journey

forward. He may see the beauty of the Divine Nature on the one hand but he may be driven away from that by the selfishness of his own nature. The salvation of man lies however in finding God in Nature and reaching Him through Nature. God's Nature is in man and around him; he has only to find God in himself or around himself.

The paths are distinct—to find God in oneself and to find God in the Universe—and yet the two paths are inseparable. One is sometimes called the path of Yoga or Occultism and the other is called the path of Nirguṇa Bhakṭi or Transcendental Devotion.

Srī Krishṇa says:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

O Arjuna, Īshvara dwells in the heart of all beings. All beings being mounted on machinery, He turns them round and round by means of Māyā (or His Divine Nature).

Men are placed in the machinery of their own bodies or vehicles—vehicles of action, desire and thought. They act, desire and think according to the limitations of those vehicles. But the Divine Nature that is behind them turns the machinery through pleasure and pain, birth after birth, gradually breaking down the limitation and giving more and more of freedom to the Self within, by harmonising the bodies more and more with the real nature of the Self within or the Higher Self of man. The self

then begins to find his own nature in the Divine Nature and comes, after all, face to face with the God within himself. As soon as the self knows the God in him, instinctively that God appears as the God in the Universe. This is the path of Occultism. On the other path, man plunges into the Universe from the very beginning. He is trained to sacrifice himself for the good of the Universe. He identifies himself through sacrifice with all beings and his nature becomes the nature of all beings. He freely gives himself up to Nature and finds God everywhere in the vast expanse of Nature. Human limitations vanish away; man-made laws yield to the laws of God; schools give way to the pages of Nature; and human institutions, having served their purpose and done their work, merge in all that Nature builds.

Though the paths are different, Occultism inevitably leads to Transcendental Love for all and for God as in all.

The Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa says:

आत्मारामाश्च मुनयो निर्ग्रन्था अप्युरुक्रमे।
कुर्वन्त्यहैतुकीं भक्तिमित्थम्भूतगुणो हरिः॥

Even though the Munis (who by meditation realise Ātman within themselves) drop down the knots of bondage and become lost in the blissful realisation of Ātman or the Divine Self in them, yet they become spontaneously, and without any reason, devoted to Him, whose steps are big enough to cover the three worlds and beyond. For such is the very nature of Īshvara.

What is the very nature of Īshvara ? To attract all unto Himself, when they only come back to their own selves, which are but parts and aspects of Himself.

Nature, which is God-Nature and which is in and around us, gradually impresses herself on the imprisoned Self in us and through the chinks of the prison doors shews something of her Beauty, her Harmony, her Love and her Unity. Drawn by these glimpses of Nature, the Self knows its own nature more and more, till it regains its Divine Nature through Nature.

And what is Beauty ? Beauty is that which attracts. Ugliness is that which repels. Take physical beauty, or moral beauty, or intellectual beauty—beauty is one and the same. It is the physical, moral, and intellectual expression, through different fields and realms, of the Divine Nature, which is Love.

On the physical side, beauty attracts. " A thing of beauty is a joy for ever " to all men at all times. Being a source of joy and bliss, it strikes that part of man's nature which is Love. When you see beauty in Nature all around, you fall in love with Nature and plunge yourself spontaneously into divinity.

And beauty is harmony and harmony is beauty. When there is no discordant note, no jar, no disharmony, no ugliness, when it is all attractive, call it beauty or harmony. There is a music in Nature, inseparable from her Beauty. It is the music of the spheres, the music of the harmonised note of the

seasons, the music of the softly running day and night, the music of the falling leaf, the rolling stream and the warbling bird, the music of dancing atoms and spherical molecules, the music of the perpetual Rasa Līlā of harmony and love all over the world. Beauty and harmony unite all in Love. Loving union with all and with the One that is all, that is what Nature leads us to; and co-operation and co-ordination through mutual sacrifice are her ways all through.

There is a way in Nature to get over the conflict between our individual nature and the Universal Nature, if only we know the nature of our Higher Self, immersed in the machinery of the lower self, as Srī Kṛishṇa says.

Vedantic literature speaks of the triple nature of our Higher Self, namely, *Chaitanya* or consciousness, *Ābhāsa* or reflection of that Chaitanya or consciousness, and the I-making mind. Chaitanya is Ātman. The Ābhāsa or reflection is Buddhi. And the I-making mind is the higher Manas in touch with the universality of Buddhi, yet drawing a circle of individuality to enable itself to be in active contact with the lower self. In the lower self are all the limitations of our personal likes and dislikes, our selfish thoughts, desires and actions.

The nature of the Higher Self is universality and harmony with Universal Nature. The Higher Self is a divine ray that feels the unity and the universality

of its Divine Nature. It knows its source and knows the rays that emanate from that one source as sister rays. It is in its own element in the inward sense of Brotherhood.

The lower self is guided by the senses, and the personal relations created by the senses, and by ideas inseparably connected with those relations. It makes a little world for itself of which it becomes the centre. Everything for that little self, and even the world for that little self of concrete images and ideas! Innumerable little worlds are thus formed, each moving in its own sphere, with little or no regard for the movements of others. Yet the Great Plan—Universal Nature—requires that all the movements must be in perfect harmony with each other, and should collectively form the movement of the Universe as a whole, attuned in every respect to the Word of God, jealously guarded in the bosom of Nature.

How to get over the fetters of the lower self which separate us from each other, and which give a separate centre to each of us? This is done when the Higher Self begins to live in us. The life of the Higher Self expresses itself through the activity of the Higher Mind, the seed of which is hidden in all of us.

The Higher Mind lives in abstractions, generalisations and ideals. The highest ideal represents an all-embracing abstraction, a broad and universal

generalisation. When we begin to live for an ideal, we harmonise the thoughts and desires of the personal self to the one ideal that rules in us. That ideal may be patriotism, or nationalism, or internationalism or, going still further, Universal Brotherhood. When the ideal takes hold of us and becomes a part of our nature; our thoughts, desires and actions break through the narrowness and limitations of the little self, and become coloured by the universality of the ideal that governs them.

Then is the time for Buddhi to come into play. It is the light of Ātman, hidden in each of us, the light that illumines the Higher Manas, but which becomes limited in the Higher Manas by the limitation of I-ness. As the Higher Manas begins to live in us more and more, as it becomes more and more illumined by the light of Buddhi, our consciousness expands, it becomes more and more universal and our knowledge becomes harmonised with the wisdom of the Great Plan.

That is the development of Buddhi in us, and through its light we not only live for an Ideal, but we live only for the Great Plan. Our actions, our desires and thoughts are all offered up to that Plan. We then become, as Srī Kṛishṇa says, *mat-karma-kṛit*— "the doer of My action". We are then on the way to get *sambodhi* or complete illumination and to become the Illumined or the Buddha. In the light of Buddhi, all are united in love, for in that light is the full

reflection of Ātman, whose nature is Love. Brahman is Love. And when Ātman rules, there is not only Universal Brotherhood, but loving brotherhood, as in Vrindāvana.

The nature of the Higher Self is the nature of the God in us and through that nature, man comes face to face with God. The ideal of Universal Brotherhood leads man to his highest possibilities and it carries him straight to the bosom of Nature, which conceals the previous Word of God and which is the one seat of Divinity in the Universe.

PART II

Now let us see some of the ways in which men have tried to follow God in Nature and through Nature. Herbert Spencer has the vision of an "unknowable" substratum, upon which all phenomenal life is built. But he does not know that that substratum is the divine substratum of life, the Divine Nature that gives life to all of us, that moulds all forms and builds up all organisms.

There is the vision of the Absolute, the vision of the Noumenon, each catching a glimpse of the Divine Nature, which is the Life, the Soul of the Universe. But philosophy falls short of the realisation of the Absolute as the all-pervading Life of the Universe.

The poet tries to pierce the veil of Nature and see the Beauty, the Harmony and the Inspiration that is in her. Intellect and Emotion approach Nature from different standpoints. Imagination draws upon her, and builds image after image on her model.

The highest art becomes Nature. Even human institutions are efforts to come into line with her and ideal republics are dreamed of in that way. It is always a question of discovering the hidden Life and

the hidden Light in Nature. Monsieur Coué sees the vision of that hidden Life and wants to utilise it for the purpose of healing.

Let us take into consideration an Indian imagination that has spiritualised the imagination of Tolstoy. Let us take the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, as expressed in his book on Indian Home Rule—I make no reference to his politics—I refer to him only as an enthusiastic lover of Nature and as one having a vision of harmony with Nature. Says Mahatma Gandhi :

> I should, however, like to add that man is so made by nature as to require him to restrict his movements as far as his hands and feet will take him. If we did not rush about from place to place by means of railways and such other maddening conveyances, much of the confusion that arises would be obviated. Our difficulties are of our own creation. God set a limit to man's locomotive ambition in the construction of his body. Man immediately proceeded to discover means of overriding the limit. God gifted man with intellect that he might know his Maker. I am so constructed that I can only serve my immediate neighbours, but in my conceit I pretend to have discovered that I must with my body serve every individual in the Universe. In thus attempting the impossible, man comes in contact with different natures, different religions, and is utterly confounded. According to this reasoning, it must be apparent to you that railways are a most dangerous institution. Man has there through gone further away from his Maker.

Let us carefully consider the position and see if that is a proper study of Nature. Nature links all life into a corporate unity. Nature is always after a wider and wider unity and harmony. Exclusion

is not the lesson of Nature and through exclusion we cannot find God in Nature. It is by the corporation of individual life, and then by a wider and wider corporation of corporate life that we approach the divinity in wide Nature. To become one with all living beings is to become one with Nature and, I might say, one with the Divinity in Nature.

Human intellect is as much a part of human nature, as the human body is. The body has limitations but intellect tries to break through the limitations one by one and build up a corporate empire with imperial unity. Human efforts attempt to attain the unity and the freedom of Nature. So long as men do not attain that unity in mind, they make physical efforts to attain it by breaking through the limitations of time and space as much as they can. All this is Nature and all this brings us nearer to the Maker. When unity is attained in mind it matters not what locomotion we use, for the lesson has been learned.

It might be argued that men were not born in houses, nor were they tillers of the soil, when they were infants in the lap of Nature. But men had to fight with the inclemencies of the weather outside, and Nature required them to put forth their best energy and fight with them. When man, by his superior training in and through Nature, rises above the frowns and freaks of weather, no houses are needed to save his head. He has then acquired the freedom which

Nature requires of him, and wide nature becomes his home.

Then, again, he has to till the soil and be sure of his food, before he can be free to cultivate the finer feelings in him, to catch glimpses from Nature and develop a civilisation, which brings about inter-dependence of men and a corporate life that gives organic unity. But when the lessons of human civilisation are learned, men become free from the limits of that civilisation; and it is then only that they can identify themselves with evolution in Nature as a part of God's Plan in the Universe. It is only for that Plan that they then live.

Again Mahatma Gandhi says:

> How do these diseases arise? Surely by our negligence or indulgence. I over-eat, I have indigestion, I go to a doctor, he gives me medicine. I am cured, I over-eat again, and I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishment deserved by me, and I would not have over-eaten again. The doctor intervened and helped me to indulge myself. My body thereby certainly felt more at ease, but my mind became weakened. A continuance of a course of a medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind.

This is no doubt true so far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth. It is true that, following the guidance of Nature, we may free ourselves from many diseases and that, by disregarding the laws of Nature, we come to grief again and again. But some of our missionaries have to do their duty at great

inconvenience and physical discomfort. They have to keep up at night and submit to untold sufferings. They fall ill. It is our duty to see that they get proper medical relief. Friends and relations attend upon patients, at the sacrifice of their own health ; and when they fall ill they deserve to get medical relief. When there is pestilence in a land, good and bad men all suffer through no fault of their own.

We cannot, therefore, say that Nature requires that there should be no medical help. But it is no doubt desirable that men should obey the laws of Nature and avoid illness to the best of their power, subject to performance of duty, with sacrifice of health as its price at times. It must however be their own duty, or *svadharma,* as long as the individual nature is not merged in the Universal Nature.

At the same time, a man may make himself immune from illness, by knowing the higher laws of Nature and by following those laws. His physical body, his desires and thoughts may all acquire, through Yoga, that union of the individual and Divine Nature—a harmony or sattva, which drives off all disharmony, disorder and distemper. In fact Yoga means union. It is only then that man is fairly on the way to find God in Nature.

Mahatma Gandhi makes the following excellent quotation from Professor Huxley :

> That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready

servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of, whose intellect is a clear, cold, logical engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order . . . whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature . . . whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience . . . who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. 'Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her and she of him.

I agree with every word of this. What Professor Huxley calls Nature, I will call Divine Nature. The individual nature has to be put down, the selfish element in it killed, through an ever-increasing knowledge of the Plan working in Nature, and through universal sympathy. It is to be brought into harmony with Divine Nature, which always splendidly responds to the advance of the individual nature. This is how a man can make the best use of Nature.

The conclusions which Mahatma Gandhi, however, draws from that quotation cannot stand for a moment:

> If this be true education, I must emphatically say that the sciences I have enumerated above (*i.e.*, Geography, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry, etc.,) I have never been able to use for controlling my senses. Therefore, whether you take elementary education or higher education, it is not required for the main thing. It does not make of us men. It does not enable us to do our duty.

Mahatma Gandhi speaks of controlling the senses as the sole end and goal of life. According to

Professor Huxley it is one of the means to an end, which is to be in harmony with Nature. To that end we should have a body well attuned to will; a clear, strong, many-sided and harmonious intellect; a mind stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature; and a vigorous will, guided by Universal Love and Brotherhood.

This is the all-round development of the man which brings him into harmony with Nature. But Mahatma Gandhi will have none of the intellectual development. He will have only a lop-sided moral development, which can never have a lasting foundation without a corresponding intellectual development. Nature does not allow an intellectual baby to become a moral giant.

Hinduism is dead against the dwarfing of the intellect. It gives the utmost freedom to the intellect to run along all possible channels, and to find out the goal along different paths. There is the greatest variety in Hindu thought, and that variety has given it a many-rooted permanency, which eventually draws an eternal life from Unity.

From the Tolstoyism of Mahatma Gandhi let us proceed to the psycho-analysis of Freud. According to that German psychologist, there is a buried consciousness, of which we are not conscious, which has to be dug out and brought back to consciousness. Here we find a search after that real consciousness of the Self, which is deep down in us and which

we have to dig up to hear the voice of the God in us.

A more pleasant way has been adopted by Mr. Homer Lane to present the same truth to us, and we are indebted to Lord Lytton for a lucid exposition of his psychology in his letter published in the March number of *The Herald of the Star*.

According to Mr. Lane, every man has his own instinct, which he calls the Law of Mother Nature; and at the same time, he is under the authority of the world, which he calls "the Law of Mother". Between "Mother" and "Mother Nature" there is a conflict, which begins at birth and lasts till death. "Mother Nature" is the divinity incarnated in every human being and is, in fact, God Himself. What this small divinity requires is freedom to develop its own powers to the utmost of its capacity. It comes in conflict with the discipline of the world, the rod of the nurse, the parents and the teacher, the wrath of public opinion, and so on, and is not allowed to have its freedom of development. Every night of your life your unconscious mind is telling its story in the form of dreams, and if those dreams be analysed properly the way to freedom may be found, and the maladies arising out of suppression may vanish away.

The conflict of Mother Nature and Mother is no doubt the conflict between the Divine Nature and the individual nature, the result of the conflict being the ultimate harmonisation of the two. But

I am not sure of the use we can always make of dreams to hear the voice of the Divine Nature. Who knows that what you hear may not be the craving of the physical body, the desire-body or the lower mental body? The God in us may speak in dreams; but we may be misled into taking a lower voice for His voice.

The ideal of Mr. Lane is thus expressed by Lord Lytton:

> The normal man is one whose racial instincts are so perfectly harmonised to his earthly environment that there is no conflict between them; one in whom God and self are so completely identified that the service of either is the service of the other; and whose every faculty is employed in the pursuit of happiness but who is incapable of feeling happiness at the expense of another; the law of whose being therefore is love, because through exercise of the creative power of love the highest happiness is to be found.

This ideal is no doubt the same as to find God in Nature and through Nature. Only what Lord Lytton calls the normal man, I should call the "perfect man".

Next, and last of all, we come to Bergson. His "Intellect" is the individual nature which divides man from man. His "Instinct or Intuition" is the Divine Nature which seeks Unity through wisdom steeped in Love. According to Bergson, it is only as intelligence rids itself of every concept and confines itself to the pure form of space that its approximation to intuition, and consequently its grasp of the

Absolute, comes about. This clearly means that, when we raise ourselves from the I-making limitations of Manas to the all-uniting Buddhi in us, we reach the field of Intuition. The life of God in us as well as in Nature flows through Buddhi. It is in Buddhi that we hear His voice in us as well as in Nature. It is by means of Buddhi, the all-uniting, all-loving principle in us, that we find God in and through Nature.

I cannot do better than quote Dr. Besant on this point:

> And that division comes out very plainly in modern Philosophy, where it seems to be recognised by men like Bergson that, in looking at the human being, we must distinguish these stages of evolution; and what he speaks of as instinct-accumulated experience, as it is sometimes called, born with a creature, is related to Buddhi rather than to the intellectual faculty. The fact is that there are very few people at present who can initiate any form of activity from the buddhic plane. From the emotional, however, in the highest stage, there is a response from that quality, that characteristic or mode of consciousness, that we speak of as Buddhi. Both really deal with the emotion of Love, in its lower and in its higher forms, and that is the great unifying force. It is Love that draws together, while, on the other hand, Intellect divides and drives apart; it is the I-creating principle.

Again, Dr. Besant in her address on Philosophy at the inauguration of the Brahmavidyāshrama quoted from *At the Feet of the Master*:

"But you must dig deep down into yourself to find the God within you, and listen to His voice, which is your voice."[1]

[1] *The Theosophist*, April, 1923.

So Bergson says: "To him who is not himself capable of giving to himself the intuition of the duration constitutive of his being, nothing will ever give it."

Thus through the thought of the West, we see how we can find God in and through Nature. Now let us pass on to the East, pure and simple.

PART III

Sri Krishna says the essence of life is to uphold the Universe as an organic unit. The Vedas take up this ideal and give an Eternal Dharma or Upholder, based upon this ideal. The two land-marks of Vedic Dharma are (1) the Varnāshrama Dharma, and (2) the Five Sacrifices. The first gives an internal organism to a nation and the second gives a corporate unity to the three worlds.

It is always the ideal of a larger and larger collective unity, based on love and sacrifice. The unity is a widening and ever-widening one, till it becomes all-embracing as Nature herself. The unit begins with the family. The man, the woman and the child become one by mutual love. The family develops into a village unit, a village community. There unity is secured by co-ordinating the different functions of the villagers. There is the village teacher, the village cultivator, the village weaver, in fact every one in the village does something or other which the village requires, though a large portion of the work is concerned with the production of food and clothing. And the work of all is so organised that there is mutual dependence, mutual sacrifice and mutual

service, and by mutual co-operation all the villagers form a corporate unit.

Now comes the Vedic vision as to organising an entire nation. That was the vision of the Manu of the Indo-Aryan Race. Through his great vision came the *Varnāshrama Dharma*. Education and Justice, Civil and Military Administration, Capital and Labour were so organised in that vision as to form a corporate unity by mutual sacrifice. The Brāhmaṇa representing Education and Justice had the highest wisdom, but not wealth and power; the Kshatriya representing Civil and Military Administration had power and the wisdom to regulate power, but not the production of wealth in his hands; the Vaishya representing Capital had the production of wealth in his hand, but not power; and the Shudra representing manual Labour had all the requirements of life and an atmosphere of sympathy and love, congenial to his rapid growth. They had all to depend upon one another, and to sacrifice for one another, and to feel and realise the unity of a national corporation. Without such an internal organisation, nationalism does not mean anything. Where capital puts down labour, and labour is at the throat of capital, where hunger in desperation usurps all power, where power is used for grasping and not for sacrifice or duty, where knowledge plans for selfish power and iniquitous rule, where competition reigns supreme

and forms conflicting interests—the nation is a nation in name only; it is a travesty of what it should be, and the vision of the future cannot go further till all that makes for the so-called nation is mended or ended.

In India, at one time, we had a national corporation under Kshatriya rule or the rule of duty and sacrifice. There was then a Brotherhood of the four varnas, working in harmony and with mutual respect and regard. Varnāshrama was real and not the sham and shadow that it is now, and the nation made a run for a larger unity—the unity of the three worlds which are inter-related in Nature. As we know more and more of the worlds, as we bring ourselves more and more in touch with those worlds, we begin to take a big jump into Nature, which carries God's will or Maya in her bosom, and which is His Shakti as manifested in the Universe. When we take that jump, we know *how* the One willed—"One I shall be many"—and *how* the many reveal the will of the One. As by transcending limit after limit we bring ourselves more and more in touch with Nature, we bring ourselves inevitably more and more in touch with the Great Plan, with the Intelligence behind It. That Intelligence is Wisdom, Love and Power combined.

When the Indo-Aryan nation was organised as a corporate unity and when there was internal harmony, it dreamed of the inter-relations of

the three worlds—the *triloki* or *tribhuvana* united as a whole and it dreamed of making those relations real by means of mutual sacrifice. The Devas of Svarga, the Pitris of the Intermediate world, the Super-men or Rishis, men and under-men or animals of our Earth, were all brought into harmonious relations, by the touchstone of sacrifice or Yajna. The unity of life, as far as it could be known or heard of, was sought to be realised, and the Indo-Aryans were trained to break the limitations of I-ness step by step and to throw themselves eventually into the lap of Mother Nature.

Man was to live for sacrifice. Man was to make himself one with the Universe by sacrifice. The wife had her indispensable place in the house for the performances of sacrifice. The carnal relation with her was only for the duty of keeping up the race, which duty was a part of the Great Plan. Mahatma Gandhi catches the true eastern ideal when he says :

> When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, excepting for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited.

In fact everything that binds and limits the man to the individual aspect of his existence is a bar to his plunging into the ocean of Nature and becoming a part of the Divine Nature.

We see the vision takes an intensive as well as an extensive aspect. Man transcends in time the limits of family, of class, of creed : he begins to live the

life of humanity itself, a life of human Brotherhood. The socialistic movements of the day take a far distant, though a much distorted, vision of the reality that is to come in the future.

The Goddess killed the Asuras, Sumbha and Nisumbha, and being pleased by the adoration of the Devas gave a vision of the future that was to unfold itself. After speaking of a terrible war against the Asuras—men with misguided intellectuality—the Goddess speaks of devastating famines and then of protective measures in the Himalayas where the Rishis dwell. Last of all she speaks of the dawn of a new civilisation or *Aruna*, with its attending evils and obstacles.

Then, says the Goddess, she will assume the form of innumerable black bees all made into one, killing all obstacles for the good of the three worlds. The bee has no fixed home. It is drawn wherever wide Nature invites it with her flower and honey, her beauty, her sweetness, her harmony. The honey that it collects is for all, not for itself. All live collectively as one family.

The *bhramarī* or bee stage indicates the Universal Brotherhood of humanity, drawn together by love, forming a common home for humanity, with common food for all. It also indicates a love of Nature, of her beauty and harmony. God speaks in Nature, through love, beauty and harmony. When humanity responds to that voice, the bhramarī stage in

Evolution is reached. The individuality then merges itself into the loving universality of inherent Brotherhood.

A stage further still and man makes himself one with Nature. He transcends all human laws, human conventions, human obligations, and human limitations. He finds God in all Nature and breaks through all limitations to be one with God in the wide, wide expanse of Nature. He knows no man and woman then, no class, no community, no sex. The tree, the animal, and the man make no difference to him.

That stage was reached by Sukadeva, the son of Vyāsa, whom none of the fascinations of human enjoyment, of a Rishi's hermitage, or of Vedic lore, could bind and fetter. Young and naked, in rapture with the beauty of Nature, he plunged himself into her embrace and was wafted away in space. The Deva girls, carelessly taking their bath naked and free, minded him not as he passed by. They found in him the divine aspect in Nature, which did not ruffle the mind with ripples of conventionalism or the differences of individualism.

The disconsolate old father followed in search of him and the Deva girls hurriedly pulled up their cloths and stood up in painful dread. "I am old" thought Vyāsa, "while my son is young and naked. Why then this marked difference in the behaviour of these Deva girls to us?" He felt ashamed that

bondage was still left in him, while his son was so fully liberated and he became proud of that.

Siva, the great God, appeared and said :

Grieve not, O Rishi. By my boon, thy son is as pure and free as Ākāśa, Vāyu, Fire, Water and Earth. Thou shalt henceforward see only the shadow of your son, like unto his form, while he has in reality all the glory of Brahman in him.[1]

Suka became one with Nature, as free and as pure as Nature, while the body in which he moved became as it were a shell to him, a piece of cloth in which he wrapped himself up at will.

यं प्रव्रजन्तमनुपेतमपेतकृत्यं
द्वैपायनो विरहकातर आजुहाव ।
पुत्रेति तन्मयतया तरवोऽभिनेदु-
स्तं सर्वभूतहृदयं मुनिमानतोऽस्मि ॥

Out on the eternal pilgrimage, not caring for the sacred thread or the duties it involves, throwing away all ceremonial observances, Suka left his father's house. Grieved with the parting, Vyāsa called out, " Son, O Son ". But the son had made himself one with all. So only the trees responded with what is called the resound. That Muni has made his abode in the hearts of all beings. I bow down to him.[2]

Kapila saw the vision of this union with Nature and he called it *Nirguṇa Bhakti* or Transcendental Devotion. He related this devotion to his mother Devahuti :

[1] *Mahābhāraṭa*, *Sānti Parvan*, xxxiii.

[2] *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, i, 2. 1.

Seek not, mother, your own liberation. It is selfish. Even if it be offered up to my people they spurn it. They want to serve Me and they want nothing else.[1]

मद्गुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मयि सर्वगुहाशये ।
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गङ्गाम्भसोऽम्बुधौ ॥

Knowing Īshvara to be at the heart of all beings, and learning how Īshvara manifests Himself in the guṇas (that work out His Plan), the devotee runs ceaselessly in mind towards Him, even as the waters of the holy Gangā ceaselessly run towards the ocean.[1]

लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्याप्युदाहृतम् ।
अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे ॥

There is no reason why the mind runs towards Him. There is no thought of gain, wealth, power or self. (In love), the mind makes a direct embrace of the Supreme Purusha, with nothing between. This is what is called Transcendental Bhakti or Devotion.

We have already seen, this Bhakti means for Kapila service of God and not one's own liberation. What then is this service of God, according to Kapila ? Certainly it is not the making of an image of God and the worshipping of that image. Worship God in the life that is around you, feeling the unity of that life with your own. This is the real way of finding God in and through Nature.

आत्मनश्च परस्यापि यः करोत्यन्तरोदरम् ।
तस्य भिन्नदृशो मृत्युर्विदधे भयमुल्बणम् ॥

[1] *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, iii, 29.

He who makes the slightest difference between himself and another is a seer of difference. For him there is great fear brought on by Death.[1]

This is an echo of the saying of the Upanishads: "Fear arises from the Second." It is a great spiritual truth that we have to pass through the trials of fear and of death till we find and realise the unity of all beings in Nature. When that is done, Nature with her three gunas has done her work for us. Life then becomes one and we have no death and no fear.

As Kapila says:

स एव भक्तियोगस्य आत्यन्तिक उदाहृतः ।
येनातिव्रज्य त्रिगुणं मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ [1]

This is the very end of Bhakti Yoga by means of which you transcend the three gunas and attain my Divine Nature.

The individual nature then expands into the divine nature, by realising unity of life in the wide expanse of Nature.

There is no essential difference of life, even between animate and inanimate beings. It is only a question of a greater or lesser manifestation of life.

जीवाः श्रेष्ठाह्यजीवानां ततः प्राणभृतः शुभे ।
ततः सचित्ताः प्रवरास्ततश्चेन्द्रियवृत्तयः ॥
तत्रापि स्पर्शवेदिभ्यः प्रवरा रसवेदिनः ।
तेभ्यो गन्धविदः श्रेष्ठास्ततो शब्दविदो वराः ॥

[1] *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, iii, 29.

रूपभेदविदस्तत्र ततश्चोभयतोदतः ।
तेषां वहुपदः श्रेष्ठाश्चतुष्पादस्ततो द्विपात् ॥
ततो वर्णाश्च चत्वारस्तेषां ब्राह्मण उत्तमः ।
ब्राह्मणेष्वपि वेदज्ञो अर्थज्ञोऽप्यधिकस्ततः ॥
अर्थज्ञात् संशयच्छेत्ता ततः श्रेयान् स्वकर्मकृत् ।
मुक्तसङ्गस्ततो भूयानदोग्धा धर्ममात्मनः ॥
तस्मान्मय्यर्पिताशेषक्रियार्थात्मा निरन्तरः ।
मय्यर्पितात्मनः पुंसो मयि संन्यस्तकर्मणः ॥
न पश्यामि परं भूतमकर्तुः समदर्शनात् ।
समदर्शिनरा नित्यं वैकुण्ठं तं व्रजन्ति ते ॥
मनसैतानि भूतानि प्रणमेद्बहुमानयन् ।
ईश्वरो जीवकलया प्रविष्टो भगवानिति ॥ [1]

Animate beings are superior to inanimate beings. After the inanimate come those that bear some thrill of life in them. Then come those that show a dawning of consciousness in them. Then those that develop the senses in them. Amongst them again those that feel Taste are superior to those that feel Touch. Then come those that feel Smell; then those that feel Sound and then those that feel Sight. Then come those that have upper and lower jaws, with teeth. Of them, first come the many-footed, then the four-footed and then the two-footed. Then come the four Varnas. The best of them is the Brāhmaṇa. Of the Brāhmaṇas, he who knows the Vedas is superior. Superior to him is one who knows not only the sense of the Vedas, but the spirit thereof. Superior to him, is one who can set at rest the doubts of others (in the understanding of the Vedas). Superior

[1] *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, iii, 29.

to him is he who knowing (through the Vedas) the duties appertaining to his own life performs them. Higher comes he who performs all actions for the sake of duty, free from selfish likes and dislikes. At the same time, he does not go counter to the dharma of his real self—the Ātman within (which is unity with all beings). Then comes he who offers up always all his actions and desires to Me. I do not find any one who is superior to him who has surrendered himself up to Me and completely offered up all his actions to Me, and who does nothing for his individual self, feeling himself one with all. The men that realise one-ness dwell always in the divine world, known as Vaikuntha. Salute all these beings in your mind (from the inanimate up to the highest animate being) and highly respect them all. For Īshvara is inside every being as its life or Jīvā and so every being has Bhagavat or the One Lord of the Universe, in him.

I have known nothing grander and nobler in all the scriptures of the world. This sweeping view of the unity of life, beginning from the mineral and going right up to the divine man, this range of relativity ending in divinity, this inner view of the Plan of God working in Nature through the evolution of form and life, this awe-inspiring vision of the Great Plan, brings us more in touch with God than anything else.

The vision of Kapila sends many in search of God and some come through that vision to God Himself in Nature. They become God's own people and God has to come down to meet and embrace them. This is the story of Vrindāvana. This is not the occasion to go into the details of that wonderful story. But I shall make a few references to shew

how the God-enthralled men and women of Vrindāvana met Him face to face in and through Nature.

Do you want to see the enactment of that divine drama? Then come away from the haunts of men, where difference dwells, where jealousy reigns, where there are high and low, rich and poor, and the fretful and harmful rule of man over man. Away from the haunts of men, where unrighteousness spreads her wily net round righteousness, where the little self sends its mighty host to kill and crush the Divine Self, come to the home of Nature, the world of Unity and Love; and then see whether there is any power in the world strong enough to throw back the rapturous rush of Love in Nature. Then let us go away from the influence of Kansa, in Gokula.

So Upānanda, the elderly Gopa, said :

उत्थातव्यमितोऽस्माभिर्गोकुलस्य हितैषिभिः ।
आयान्त्यत्र महोत्पाता बालानां नाशहेतवः ॥
यावदौत्पातिकोऽरिष्टो व्रजं नाभिभवेदितः ।
तावद्बालानुपादाय यास्यामोऽन्यत्र सानुगाः ॥
वनं बृन्दावनं नाम पशव्यं नवकाननम् ।
गोपगोपीगवां सेव्यं पुण्याद्रितृणवीरुधम् ॥

Away from this place, all of us who wish well to Gokula! Great dangers befall us here, that augur ill for our boys. Without waiting for more of them to overpower our pasture land, let us take our boys and go elsewhere, with all the attendants. There is the forest known as

Vrindāvana, well suited for the cows, with its fresh forest lands. Holy are its hills, herbs and grasses. The Gopas, the Gopis and the cows will be well served by them.[1]

The elderly Gopas and their wives were real guardians of the ideal boys and girls, who were to take part in a divine drama which the world had never witnessed before, and who were to form an ideal colony of God men and God women to be recruited from the world outside. So they all came to Vrindāvana, away from the rule of earthly kings.

Nature appeared in all her beauty and all her sweetness at that holy centre. The Gopa boys and girls were as free as Nature herself. As the *yamuna* rolled, the peacock danced, the *kokila* sang, divine music played over all through the flute of Krishna. The ideal colony grew up in the embrace of Nature.

But if the outer human rule was avoided, there was the inner rule of the Devas, finding out good karma and bad karma in men and creating good and bad conditions in life—good and bad karma according to the injunctions of the Vedas, which the Rishis find out for each Yuga period. But what karma and conventional religion were there for the boys and girls of Vrindāvana, who were wiping out their individuality in the embrace of divinity? Nanda made preparations for the worship of Indra, the king

[1] *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, x, 11.

of Devas, on the day that is sacred to him. But Krishna said :

कर्मणा जायते जन्तुः कर्मणैव विलीयते ।
सुखं दुःखं भयं क्षेमं कर्मणैवाभिपद्यते ॥
अस्ति चेदीश्वरः कश्चित् फलरूप्यन्यकर्मणाम् ।
कर्तारं भजते सोऽपि न ह्यकर्तुः प्रभुर्हि सः ॥

Man comes into birth and meets his death through karma. Joy and sorrow, fear and blessing all come through karma. If there is any Īshvara (like Indra) to deal with the fruits of karma he can wield his power only over those that do things (for themselves and therefore acquire karma). He has however no power over one who does no act (for himself, but whose actions are all offered up to the Lord of the Universe).[1]

न नः पुरो जनपदा न ग्रामा न गृहा वयम् ।
नित्यं वनौकसस्तात वनशैलनिवासिनः ॥

We have no towns, no communities, no villages, no houses. We are dwellers in forests. O father, the hills and forests are our homes.

That is to say, we are of Nature and we belong to Nature and the lap of Nature is our divine home. The beauty, the harmony, the music of Nature are blended in that home with the music of divine love ever pouring forth its sweetness in every part of Vrindāvana, which is the very heart of Nature on Earth.

Indra resented. There was a trial of strength. The inner Government of the Devas had to yield and the direct rule of the Sweet Lord was established in

[1] *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, x, 24.

Vrindāvana. The Devas gave way and Krishna was installed as the Govindā of Vrindāvana. The direct rule of the Sweet Lord in and over the very heart of Nature (which Vrindāvana really is) is the Rule of Love, One Lover drawing others in love to Him, in various ways. And when those others touch Him and embrace Him in Love they become God men and God women, channels of His Love to the world, His own Shakti, His own Energy, His own people bearing the nectar of His Love to all. They become one with Nature and they pour out their life, light and love through Nature, for all. But Love is the keynote of that Life and that Light, dominating all.

Glimpses of that vision you may catch in the song of the bird, in the murmur of the stream, in the glory of the rising sun, in the love of the mother, in the rapture of the poet, in the vision of the artist, in the flights of philosophy and in the thrill of music. Glimpses of that vision you may find everywhere in everything that sweetens life, that creates harmony and peace, and brings human laws and human relations into line with the inner laws of Nature, who jealously carries the Word of the Eternal Lover in her bosom.

And as the vision becomes the only reality, the kingdom of Heaven comes within the reach of man, making a Vrindāvana of the whole earth.

Printed by J R. Aria at the Vasanta Press, Adyar, Madras.